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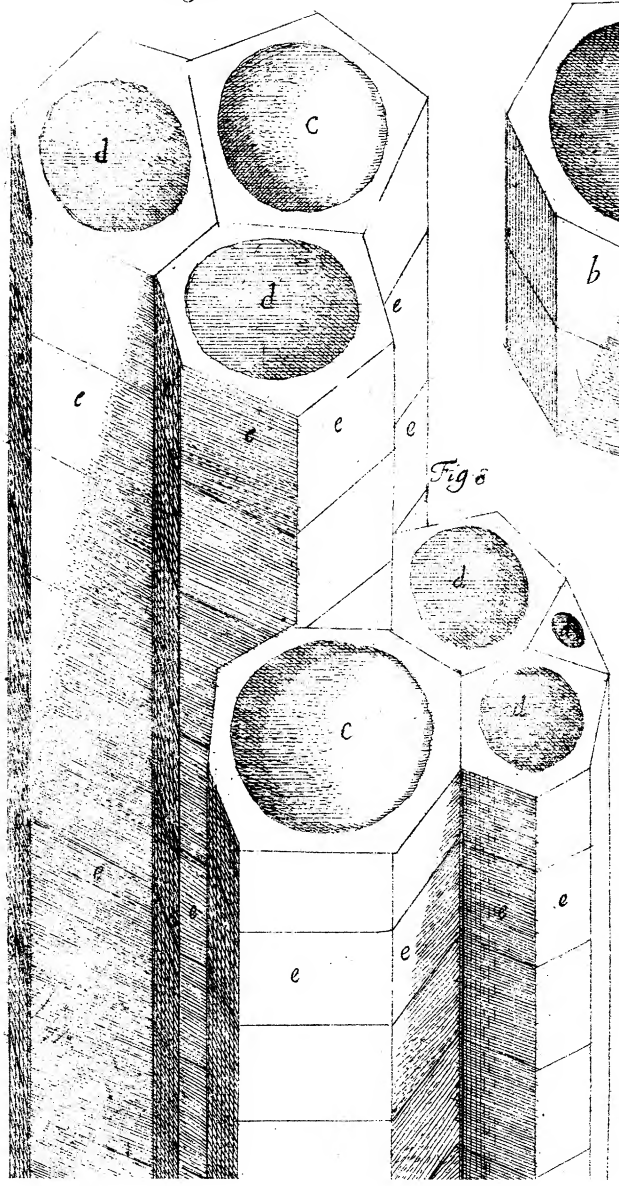

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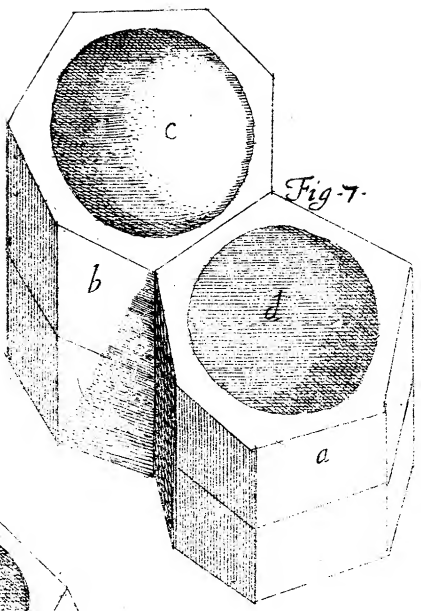

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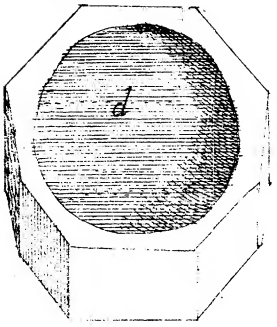

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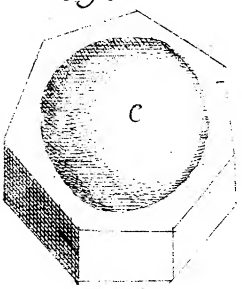

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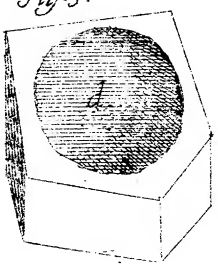

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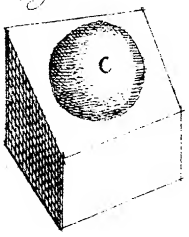

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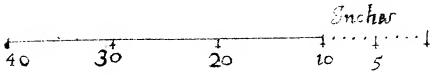

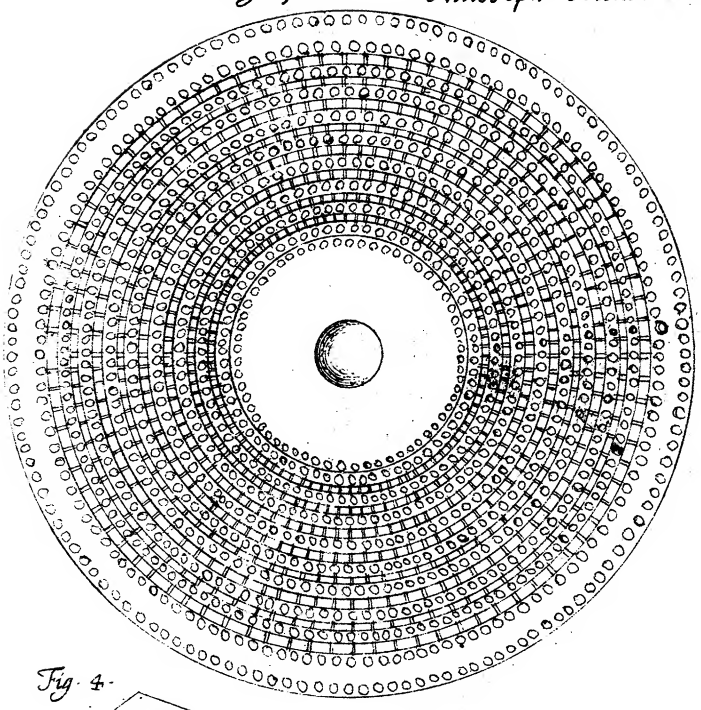

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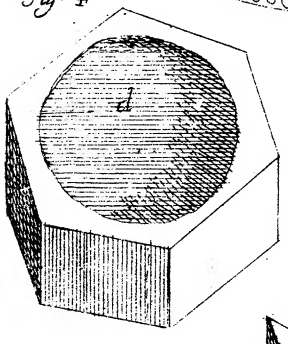

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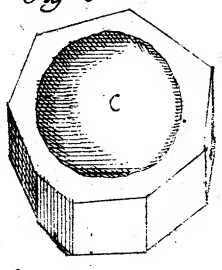
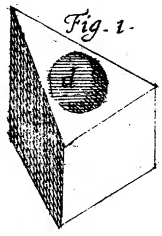


Fig. 1.



PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS.

For the Month of May, 1698.

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I. *Part of a Letter from Mr.* Ralph Thoresby, *F. R. S. to Dr.* Martin Liſter, *Fellow of the Colledge of Phyſicians and R. S. concerning a Roman* Sheild.

SInce my former, having procured an old *Roman Shield*, of a different form from that I had before, and obſerving them both to be of different Materials from the uſual Deſcriptions of them (which I alſo apprehend to be in other parts de-

fective) I reſolved to make a more particular Inſpection into their Texture, and whereas they are generally ſaid to be *è ligno, corio ſuperinducto*, upon a ſtrict Survey, there is nothing of Wood, but the Handle, in either of them. The Ancient *Romans* I obſerve had Three Words, *Scutum, Parma, & Clypeus*, for that defenſive Weapon we generally Engliſh a *Sheild*, which notwithſtanding their different Forms or Matter, their Authors (eſpecially in the Declenſion of the Empire) frequently confound, as, if I miſtake not, we do *Sheild, Buckler*, and *Target*. The *Scutum, & Clypeus*, in Form, *quæ enim rotunda, & in orbem juſtum relata, Clypeos dixere*, (and of this ſort are thoſe votive Sheilds upon the Colums or Trunk of Palm Trees. inſcribed, VIC. AVG. or DAC. PAR. *&c.* in their old Coins) *quæ in longum exibant, Scuta*, both the *Scutum* and *Parma*, are by very good Authors, as well more ancient as modern, poſitively ſaid to be of Wood covered with Leather, and ſo particularly Mr. *Ob. Walker*, in his late ingenious *Hiſt. of Coins*; but the enſuing Deſcription will evince, that *Bernardus ipſe non videt omnia* This Sheild or Buckler is of the *Parma* Kind, and rightly ſo called, *quod è medio in omnes partes ſit par*, whereas the *Scutum* was moſtly Oval, tho' ſometimes *imbricatum*, with Corners equally broad, it is Fifteen Inches Diameter, whereof a little more than a third part is taken up with the *Umbo*, or protuberant Boſs at the Navel, which is made of an Iron *Convex* Plate, wrought hollow on the inſide, to receive the Gladiator's Hand, upon the Center of this is a leſſer Boſs, wherein there ſeems to have been fixed, ſome kind of *Cuſpis*, or ſharp offenſive Weapon, to be uſed when they came to fight Hand to Hand, but the Form of this I cannot deſcribe, both the Sheilds being defective in that point; nor can I receive any Light from my Collection of Coins, for tho' it ſeem to be the ſame that *Mars Bellator* or *Gradivus* (for *Mars Quirinus* is not armed or marching) is uſually deſcribed with, yet the Sheild being carried in the Left-Hand, only the Back Part of it is apparent. From the ſaid *Umbo* the Sheild is Four Inches and an half broad on each ſide, in which are 11 circular equidiſtant Rows of Braſs Studs of that Size, that *Vide Fig.* 9. 222 are ſet in the outmoſt Circle, which is 4 Foot wanting 3 Inches, (for that is the Circumference of the Buckler) and ſo proportionably in the leſſer Circles to the Center of theſe 11 Rows of Brazen Studs, the inmoſt Circle is placed upon the

Umbo

Umbo it ſelf, the next 8 upon as many circular Plates of Iron, each a third of an Inch broad. The two outermoſt upon one thicker Plate an Inch broad: in the little Intervals between theſe circular Plates are plainly diſcovered certain croſs *Laminæ*, that paſs on the Back of the other, from the *Umbo* to the exterior Circle; and theſe Iron Plates are alſo about the third part of an Inch at the broader End towards the Circumference, but gradually contracted into a narrower Breadth, that they may be brought into the Compaſs of the *Umbo* at the Center. The inner Coat next to thoſe Iron Plates (for I cut it a little open behind, that I might more diſtinctly diſcern the Work) is made of very thick hard ſtrong Leather, which cuts bright, ſomewhat like Parchment. Upon that is a ſecond Cover of the ſame, and on the outſide of this are plaited the Iron Pins that run through the Braſs Studs; for the above-mentioned Braſs Studs are caſt purely for Ornament upon the Heads of the ſaid Iron Pins the ſixth part of an Inch long, that none of the Iron appears: this reminds me of *Julius Ceſar*'s Policy, who, as *Suetonius* tells us, countenanced this piece of Pride or Oſtentation in his Army, *ut Argento & Auro politis Armis ornaret, ſimul & ad ſpeciem, & quo tenaciores eorum in prælio eſſent, metu damni.* The next Cover to the plaiting of the ſaid Nails (which paſs through the circular and croſs Iron Plates, and both the Leather Covers) is a pure linnen Cloth, but diſcoloured, though perhaps not with Age only, but ſower Wine and Salt, or ſome other Liquid wherein it ſeems to have been ſteeped. And laſtly, upon the ſaid Linnen is the outmoſt Cover, which is of ſofter Leather, all which Coats that compoſe the Sheild, are bound together by two circular Plates of Iron, a thin and narrow one towards the Center, and a thicker and large one, an Inch broad at the Circumference, which is curiouſly nailed with two rows of very ſmall Tackets, above 400 in Number, the vacant Holes whence ſome of the Nails are dropt out, are little bigger than to admit the Point of a Pair of ſmall Compaſſes, both which Rims do likewiſe faſten the Handle (the only part of Wood) which has alſo Six other Iron Plates about three or four Inches long, to ſecure it.

That Sheild which I lately procured, differs not ſo much in Size (though it is compleatly a Foot larger in the Circumference) as in the Form; for whereas this already deſcribed is almoſt flat, except the ſwelling *Umbo*, this is abſolutely *Concave*, and

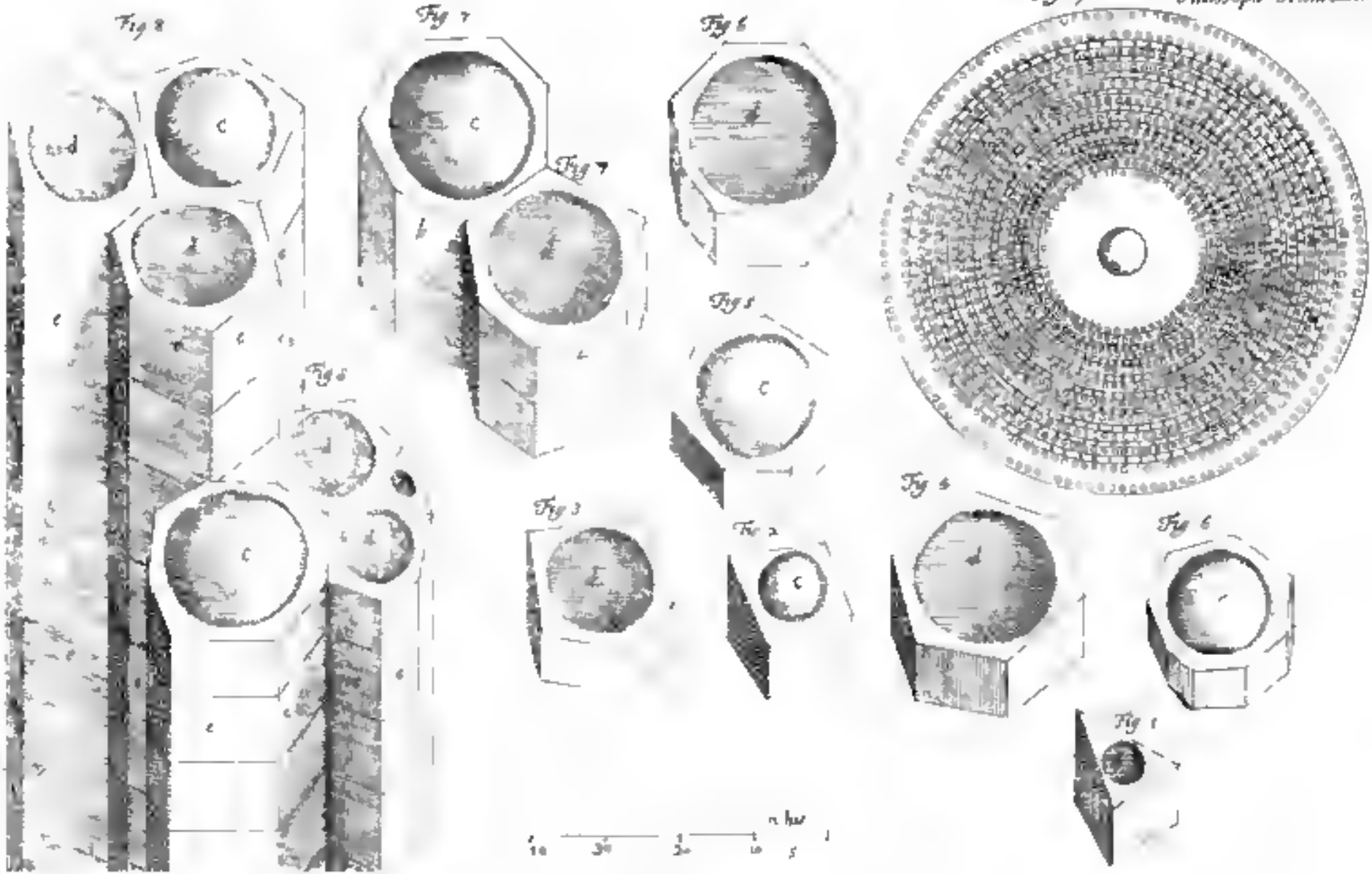
and from the Skirts of the protuberant Boſs in the middle, it riſes gradually to the Circumference, which is nigh three Inches perpendicular from the Center; this has Fourteen Rows of the like Braſs Studs, but the circular Plates of Iron they are fixed in, do not lie upon other croſs Plates, as the former does, but each from the Center, upon the outer Edge of the other, which occaſions its riſing in that Concave manner.

That theſe were part of the Acoutrement of the Roman *Equites*, rather than either the *Velites* or *Haſtati*, I conclude, becauſe that, though all in general had Sheilds, yet thoſe of the *Velites*, who were as the *Forlorn Hopes*, ſeem more ſlight, and are expreſly ſaid to be, *è ligno corio ſuperinducto*, thoſe of the *Haſtati* are not only ſaid, *e pluribus lignis & aſſerculis conſtit, &c.* but were alſo Four Foot long to cover the whole Body, when ſtooping; of which kind were likewiſe thoſe of the *Principes* and *Triarii*. Whereas the Deſcription that the Anonymous Author of *Roma Illuſtrata* with *Fabricius*'s Notes, gives in his *Armatara Equitum*, comes the nigheſt this, *Scutum ſive Parmam habebant ex bovillo corio, arte leviter durata*, but then he adds, *eoque mero, nulla materie ſubjecta*, omitting not only the ornamental Studs, but the Iron Work, which *Camillus* firſt contrived as a defence againſt the immenſe Swords of the *Gauls*. I have endeavoured to make this Deſcription more intelligible by a Draught of the Sheild above-mentioned. *Vide Fig.* 9.

Leeds, 26 *Febr.* 169$\frac{7}{8}$.

POSTSCRIPT.

HAving heard of ſome Roman Coins lately plow'd up about *Nottingham*, I procured a Parcel of them, but they prove common, and moſt of *Tetricus*, tho' ſome alſo of *Gallienus*, *Victorinus*, and *Claudius Gothicus*.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